THE Reconstructionist

l. XI. January 11, 1946 Shebat 9, 5706 No. 17

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REALITIES AND VALUES *CORRESPONDENCE*

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MORRIS ADLER is a chaplain in the Army of the United States and has contributed many articles to the RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

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DITORIALS

PLEDGE THAT MUST E FULFILLED

THE National Conference of the United Jewish Appeal held in Atlantic City, December 15-17, 1945, was an important and soul-stirring event. It registered the unity of purpose of American Jewry in accepting the responsibility which history has thrust on it. The delegates to the Conference realized that American Jewry, by reason of its numbers, freedom and prosperity, must henceforth provide not only most of the means but also most of the manpower and leadership for Israel's struggle for survival and freedom in the modern world.

The Conference demonstrated the unity of American Jewry by the unanimity with which the resolutions were adopted and by the common spirit of all the addresses delivered by the leaders of the three constituent national organizations, the Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal and the National Refugee Service. All alike bespoke a recognition of the fact that the causes which their respective organizations represented were essentially one—the cause of the survival and welfare of the Jewish people.

The solidarity of American Jewry with the rest of world Jewry was dramatically expressed by the participation of Jewish leaders from abroad who had borne the brunt of Israel's struggle for life and liberty on the Palestinian and European fronts. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization, and Eliezer Kaplan, treasurer of the Jewish Agency in Palestine, represented Palestine's role in the work of redemption and reconstruction. From Europe there came to the Conference Jewish leaders who had stood by their people in their worst trials, had suffered along with them, had survived only by the most astounding miracles and were now dedicating their lives to the task of reconstruction and rehabilitation. Among these were Josef Rosenzaft, Chairman of the Central Jewish Committee representing the 80,000 displaced Jews in Germany, who had seen his wife and two children die in a concentration camp and who himself had been confined for 6 years in such camps, including the horror camp of Bergen-Belsen; Dr. Salo Kleerekeper, President of the Jewish Coordinating Committee in Holland, who had had to live in hiding from the Nazis for three years; Captain Robert Gamzon, President of the *Eclaireurs Israelites de France,* (Jewish Scout Movement), a former leader of a special Jewish Maquis unit, who had direct-

ed an underground network for hiding Jews and providing them with false identity papers.

(Dr. Leo Baeck, the president, until its dissolution, of the *Central Verein der Deutschen Juden,* who was almost starved to death at the time of his liberation from the Theresienstadt concentration camp, arrived too late for the Conference, but is also in this country in the interest of the U.J.A.)

The speeches of such Jewish leaders as these evoked other presences as well, invisible presences that were mute, yet spoke eloquently to the hearts of all who attended the Conference — the ghosts of our millions of dead. At the Sunday evening session, a memorial banner was displayed bearing the legend, "5,700,000— did they die in vain?" And the principal resolution adopted by the Conference took the form of a pledge by American Jewry in answer to that question. It began by stating: "We mourn the millions of Jews who were slain because they were Jews. Their terrible fate demonstrated once again to the world that bigotry is a shield behind which crouch destructive forces aimed at the freedom and well-being of all men. Their fate was also a solemn warning to living Jews that one destiny binds them." And the resolution concluded: "To that end we pledge to the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees, Overseas Needs and Palestine our unreserved effort to help in raising during 1946 the sum of $100,000,000 in token of our understanding of the primacy of the United Jewish Appeal as the agent of American Jewry to extend aid to our stricken people. We further pledge that, as individuals and as communities, we shall take all steps necessary to reach this goal."

To fulfill that pledge will not be easy. It means that American Jewry will have to give to this cause almost three times as much as it contributed for similar purposes during the last year and far more than it has ever given to any cause whatsoever. But the pledge must be fulfilled. On its fulfillment depends whether Hitler shall win or lose his war against the Jews, for our people are still suffering and dying in that war. "One destiny" does indeed bind all of us, both the living and the dead. If, in spite of Hitler and the forces of evil he has unleashed the Jewish people revives and lives as a creative force in human history, then the millions of those whose tragic death moved us to action will live through us; but if in our selfishness we fail to insure a better future for our people everywhere then American Jewry will have demonstrated that it too is dead. Let us oversubscribe the $100,000,000 pledge and thus proclaim that we, together with the millions of our slaughtered brothers and sisters, "shall not die but live and declare the work of God."

THE PREJUDICE AGAINST IMMIGRATION

PRESIDENT Truman has given orders for the admission of displaced persons and refugees to America up to the full number allowed annually according to the quotas established by our immigration laws. Particularly child-refugees are to be given preference. The carrying out of the President's directives would result in the admission of 3,900 such immigrants monthly and would certainly bring relief from vagabondage or intolerable detention in D.P. camps to great numbers of wretched people, non-Jewish as well as Jewish. The President also went out of his way to express his opposition to legislation pending in Congress for the further restriction of immigration to the United States.

The decision of the President was

umane one and will be generally applauded as such, except by anti-Semites nd alien-baiters, throughout the nation nd abroad. Some Zionists may be disposed to cast aspersions on the President's notives. They may interpret his action as alculated to take the onus from his surender to Great Britain in the matter of ewish immigration into Palestine. Yet, f the President had not taken such acion, these same people would have been he first to condemn him for shutting the oors of America in the face of Jews who annot remain in Europe and who are ot being admitted to Palestine. We, therefore, notwithstanding our disapproval of he President's Palestine policy, join in he almost universal approbation accorded to him for his decision on facilitating efugee immigration to America, within he limits of his executive authority.

We cannot refrain, however, from expressing the hope that the approval of the admission of these refugees may start Americans thinking about our immigration policy generally and the need for revising it, not only in the interest of future potential immigrants, but of the United States itself. This point was recently made in an article by Max Lerner, which appeared in one of New York City's liberal newspapers, (*PM,* December 26, 1945). The article is entitled, "Shall America Be a Closed Country?" The author's answer is, *No,* and this is his reason:

"The real wealth of a nation is human life. . . . We recognize that our human resources count far more than our natural resources. Put it this way: the natural resources are *for* human beings, and they can be transmuted into wealth only *by* human beings. But if this is true about those who are already here as Americans, why is it not just as true about those who want desperately to come here and grow into Americans? Is their human quality or human need any less than ours?"

Advocates of restrictive immigration always think of immigrants as competing for jobs with people already here; they do not think of them as creating jobs by their purchase of goods, which swells the profits of business and industry. We Jews can point to a striking example of how immigration to a country adds to its wealth. Palestine is a small country and one that lacks many of the raw materials, such as coal and iron, on which a national economy in a machine age is largely based. Back in 1930, when the Jewish population was about 170,000 and the Arab about 750,000, the Simpson Report stated that there was not room in Palestine for more than 20,000 new Jewish settlers without crowding out the Arabs. Today the Jewish population of Palestine is more than 550,000 and the Arab about a million. How was this made possible? The answer is plain: the additional immigration created new wealth that increased the absorptive capacity of the land. If that could be done in a little desert country like Palestine, what could not be done in a country as large and as rich in resources as America? And, if the objection is raised that Jewish capital poured into Palestine from other lands, there is certainly no lack of capital in America, to employ the services of men in converting its resources into wealth.

To be sure, there was a time when a considerable migration to America from lands with a lower standard of living did have its economic dangers, and much of the opposition to immigration today is an inheritance from that time. Before labor was organized to bargain collectively with capital and before it had the support of law in such bargaining, it was possible for selfish employers to exploit the immigrant's immediate need for a job in order to depress wages and break unions.

At that time, American labor justly felt that, even as American capital was protected from foreign competition by tariff walls, so American labor had to be protected by restrictive immigration legislation. That is not the situation today. Labor's right to organize and bargain collectively is guaranteed. The admission of the new immigrant into the ranks of organized labor would be an asset, not a liability, and, since the laborer needs food, clothing, shelter and all kinds of goods and services for which he pays, an increased immigration would mean an expanded market for American industry.

In our day, the only obstacle to a liberalizing of our immigration laws is prejudice. The liberalizing of immigration opportunities is blocked by racial prejudice of the Nazi type. This is evidenced by the way the quota system favors "Nordic" immigration, as against all other. After the defeat of the Nordic *Herrenvolk,* this prejudice is an anachronism as well as an injustice. It should be denounced, and our immigration laws should be revised to permit a resumption of the traditional hospitality of America to men of all nationalities and races.

AN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO PALESTINE'S MAN-POWER

SHOULD young American Jews be encouraged to go to Palestine? This question has, almost overnight, ceased to be a theoretical one. At a recent convention of Junior Hadassah, considerable attention was given to the "call," issued by Chaim Weizmann two years ago, for American *halutzim.* At once, the American Jewish Committee released a statement denouncing any move to initiate a drive for *halutzim* in the United States. In spite of the sentiments expressed by the Committee, the League for Labor Palestine, in cooperation with *Hechalutz,* has launched a campaign to popularize the idea of serving the Jewish people in *Eretz Yisrael.* And Dr. Silver, recently returned from Palestine, seems to favor the plan wholeheartedy. While only a few graduates of *"haksharah"* have sailed during the past few months, hundreds await their turn, and, to judge by the temper of American Zionist youth groups, many hundreds more may be expected to respond to the call.

In some quarters, opposition has been expressed to the whole project, not on the ground that Americans are not needed, nor on the ground that they are not within their rights—but on the ground of creating a misapprehension in the minds of Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish, which might militate against the entire Zionist movement. If Americans are urged to "migrate" to Palestine, the impression may be created that Zionists are seeking immigrants only to add to the total Jewish population of Palestine, and thus to make possible the creation of a Jewish majority there for political purposes.

It is very important, therefore, at this time to clarify the entire matter in the minds of Americans. Let us, first, make one thing clear: we are in favor of American *halutziut.* We believe that American Jews are as much a part of world Jewry as the Jews of any other land; we believe that the establishment of a homeland for the Jewish people will redound to the benefit of all Jewry, culturally, religiously and socially, and, therefore, that American Jews would be deprived of a basic right if they were deprived of the opportunity to participate personally in the great enterprise of Jewish nation-building.

But certain other aspects of American *halutziut* must be clearly stated. The movement must be understood as an attempt to bring to Palestine trained and healthy young people who can introduce

American techniques and "know-how," and assume leadership among the thousands of refugees who will bring to Palestine only their own broken and starved bodies. If Palestine is to be able to absorb these thousands of unhappy folk, it will require the aid of hundreds of strong and able young people. The emphasis, therefore, will be placed on *experts,* available nowhere in the world at present except in our own country. American *halutzim* will not be unique in this role. American Christians have traveled and settled in all parts of the world, as missionaries either of Christian religion or American medicine. Schools, factories, hospitals dot the globe, founded by Americans and conducted by Americans prepared to spend their years among the natives."

The phenomenon of importing man power to build up a country is not unique. Only the other day a dispatch from France revealed that that nation is seeking three million workers prepared to settle down and become Frenchmen, and help rebuild the shattered nation.

Furthermore, let no one infer from American *haluziut* that those who advocate it have lost faith in the possibilities of Judaism in the diaspora. To be sure, there are some who urge young Jews to go to Palestine because "it can happen here," or because Jewish life is bound to deteriorate to such a degree that anyone interested in Jewish culture and religion will be bound to feel out of place and unhappy. We, however, believe that a strong and creative Palestine is indispensable for the future of Judaism in America, and we are as interested in the ultimate enrichment of our own country as we are in immediate aid to Palestine.

The question is asked: what right do Americans have to take immigration certificates away from European refugees who need to migrate? The answer cannot be doctrinaire. It would be ridiculous to say that the upbuilding of Palestine is the only consideration and that, therefore, American *halutzim* are more important than European. Equally, it would be foolish to say that rescue is the only desideratum and that Palestine as a homeland counts for nothing. Both factors must be considered; and, when we consider them, we must conclude that, *for the sake of the refugees as well as for the sake of Palestine,* out of every thousand certificates at least fifty should go to *halutzim* who are settling there out of choice. (The ratio is merely a suggestion.)

American Jewry will some day be proud to claim a share in *"Yerushalayim ha-benuyah,"* a share consisting not only of material means but also of her finest human material.

REALITIES AND VALUES

One of the most serious Jewish problems is the reluctance of Jews to qualify for positions of Jewish communal leadership. As a result, these positions are often manned by people with little or no Jewish training. The Rabbinical Assembly of America has recently launched a plan for contributing to the solution of this problem. Sixty young people, selected by rabbis of their respective congregations, assembled in conference as a Leadership Training Fellowship. Plans were laid for their continuing their Jewish studies with a view to eventually entering one of the schools of the Jewish Theological Seminary, which would prepare them for a professional career in the rabbinate, Jewish education, Zionism, public relations work or other form of Jewish communal service. In the meantime, in communities where there are schools of higher Jewish education, they would pursue their studies in those schools under the guidance of the sponsoring

rabbi and a teacher designated by him. This plan, if successful, should solve part of the problem. Another important part is up to our Jewish community agencies, which must see to it that properly trained Jewish professionals obtain secure positions at dignified salaries.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH CONgress reports a judicial decision which should be of interest to Jews throughout the world. It was rendered by Justice Keiller Mackay, of the High Court of Justice of Ontario. The decision declared "void and of no effect" a land sale contract which stipulated that the land must not be sold to Jews "or persons of objectionable nationality." What gives the decision its significance beyond the jurisdiction of the particular court in which it was rendered, and even beyond the borders of Canada, is the fact that Justice Mackay based his judgment on the human rights clause of the United Nations Charter. The Canadian Jewish Congress's press release points out that, if that clause of the Charter is internationally binding, the Justice's decision would serve as a precedent for declaring illegal the White Paper restrictions on the sale of land in Palestine to Jews.

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WE HAVE ON PREVIOUS OCCAsions given our reasons for opposing the plan of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (CJFWF) for a national budgeting service. We wish here, however, to register our objection to a particular tactic used in urging it upon the local communities. The Council has recently published a letter from Charles P. Taft, acting chairman of the President's War Relief Control Board, to Sidney Hollander, President of the Council, doubtless at Mr. Hollander's solicitation. The War Relief Control Board is soon to be liquidated and so Mr. Taft writes: "The review of agency budgets is a function which properly should be continued after our liquidation by voluntary organizations rather than a government agency." About the specific Jewish issues involved in the controversy between the advocates and opponents of national budgeting Mr. Taft probably knows little and cares less. But Mr. Hollander knows that, in certain Jewish circles, the opinion of any Gentile of prominence outweighs that of the best-informed and most loyal Jew. It seems to us a very undignified procedure for a Jewish organization which is making a bid for the confidence of the Jewish community to try to bolster its case by an appeal to a non-Jewish authority. The action of the CJFWF in this matter should hurt rather than help the cause of national budgeting.

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THE YEMENITE JEWS ARE VERY dark-skinned. They are evidently of a racial strain different from that of the European Jews. But in their religion and culture, their traditions and loyalties, they are Jews like the rest of us, and very good Jews. Lacking the educational advantages enjoyed by Western Jewry, the Yemenites represent for the most part a lower economic stratum, but every attempt is made by the Yishuv to raise their standard of living and to include them without discrimination in the Jewish community. This is obviously as it should be. It is interesting, however, to note the impression it makes on the American Negro. This is what Roi Ottley says of the treatment of the Yemenites in Palestine: "Palestine is a utopia for them. For there is a complete freedom for colored peoples—in more ways than in theory. There is liberty to worship. There is no residential segregation nor job discrimination. Nor are there any formidable barriers to marriage with Whites. Social equality is

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Ends Mean Means

By MORRIS ADLER

ONE of the main functions of religion has been to teach people the proper ends of life. As society developed new and better instrumentalities for living, it was religion's task to remind it of the goals to which our increased opportunities should direct us. For it is a pathetic human propensity to become so absorbed in, and dominated by means and instruments as to overlook and forget purposes and objectives. Means have too often in history become confused with ends. "Therefore," said the prophet Habakuk, "they sacrifice unto their net and burn incense unto their drag." The state, the altar, the market place are examples of instruments that have universally been treated as ultimates. Perhaps art, science and education should be added to the list. The most significant expression of being aware of the presence of God is to conduct our daily lives in terms of ennobling goals. A great portion of the message of the prophets is devoted to a magnificent castigation of a generation that harnessed good instruments to evil goals and substituted means for ends. Henry D. Thoreau, a prophet in the American tradition, bitterly reflected that 19th century progress consisted of developing "improved means to unimproved ends." It is one of religion's glories that, at its best, it has striven to inculcate in people, the knowledge of and loyalty to worthy values and purposes.

The Present Challenge to Religion—the Problem of Means

We are now, however, at a stage in society's evolution in which men possess at least a rational recognition of the ideal objectives of living. The seers and thinkers of the ages have introduced into the cultural heritage of our civilization a system of social and individual values which are lofty and authentic. We know that justice and peace are the ends to which a state should properly be dedicated. We know that justice and peace are the ends to which a state should properly be dedicated. We understand that the measure of freedom enjoyed by the generality of men within a society, is equally the measure of the humanity by which that society is characterized. We are persuaded that our economic machinery can serve no greater purpose than to bring within the ken of the common man, the opportunities for better living which our skill and inventiveness have devised. We are, or should be, cognizant of the truth, that the ends of education are the liberalizing of the mind, the sensitizing of the conscience, and the socializing of the impulses.

The religious and other influences have succeeded in bringing to increasing numbers of men the knowledge of the ideal purposes of life; though they have not conspicuously succeeded in transforming such knowledge into a mainspring to habitual conduct and relationships.

Today we are faced by a challenge, which is a complete reversal of that which confronted religion in a former age. Men —and we refer to those known as good and respectable men, who comprise the backbone of our churches, our stable citizenry and our communities—are committed to good and lofty objectives. A curious paralysis, however, prevents them from forging the means, or making use of existing instrumentalities to achieve those objectives. There seems to be a prevailing disinclination on their part to thinking in terms of methods and tech-

niques for the implementation of the goals they profess to desire. A persistent aloofness prevents them from utilizing honorable expedients for the realization of their just aims.

The Need for Participation in Politics

Even a cursory glance at the present situation which is rendered only less superficially critical by reason of our victory, will reveal that perhaps the most important pathway to a more stable and just society is through political action. We are at one of those crucial stages when society must either raise itself to a new level of political and economic organization or evermore be doomed to the nemesis of war and the certainty of ultimate self-destruction. Our social thinking must be set in a new and larger orbit than ever before and a new element must be introduced into our social cohesiveness. Our sufferings have vindicated the idealistic faith in justice and equity not only as ethically desirable but also as biologically imperative if we are to survive.

The many discussions about the post-war world reveal that a knowledge of the objectives towards which our society should move is widespread. Yet our potentially most useful citizens disdain the sole instrumentality for the realization of such objectives. There is a kind of "genteel tradition" among too many gifted men, touching politics. The word has ugly connotations. It sullies, we believe, its practitioners. If, as someone has said, a statesman is a dead politician, an alive politician is not an admirable type. Politics is not a career for an honest gentleman. We have the goals—but we are not prepared to employ the means to attain them.

This condescension toward political activity has actually meant that in many municipalities and states, political authority is vested in a group of men undistinguished either by high purposes or by ethical practices. This abdication of responsibility and participation on the part of earnest and intelligent men has deprived our civil government of much needed leadership. Whenever civic corruption became flagrant and its stench filled the whole atmosphere a spasm of revolt seized our gentry, the result was that the rascals were turned out and a reform administration installed. Soon the tumult would die down. The old gang would employ the interval to mend its political fences. After the lapse of a term, or sometimes two terms, the city was once again in the grip of the same corrupt crew. The indignation of the righteous was utterly spent. A consistent and vigilant interest has never characterized those elements which, by reason of education, capacity and personal integrity, are equipped to give us better government.

Insistence on such an interest is what our religious institutions must emphasize with fearless forthrightness and patient persistence. Social and spiritual aims must be wedded to specific social instrumentalities and programs of action. Those of us who have hitherto kept aloof must overcome our disdain and enter the arena of practical politics. To be sure, there are risks and there is unpleasantness involved in such a step. It means hard work, ringing doorbells, organizing groups, talking on street-corners; it means exposing oneself to criticism; it means courting ridicule and set-back; it means being thrown into the company of individuals with whom we might not otherwise care to associate; it means nerve-wracking responsibility and leading even one's private life in public; and it means suffering the traditional ingratitude of communities to their public servants. It may mean a sacrifice of one's opportunities of social and professional advancement. But if we are

unprepared to assume such risks, we have no moral right to speak of ideals and aspirations. The sun is too low in the Western sky, to elaborate the thesis that philanthropy or any other palliative is wholly adequate for a solution of society's needs in our day. It is only as we forge strong political instruments of action and place men of vision and ideals in authority that we can hope to ride through the storm.

Honest men must fight their way into the councils of our political parties. They must be heard in the press. They must organize to act. They must plan a grand strategy on the side of a progressive government, for the lines are now being drawn. We must break the monopoly over our political destiny held by obtuse ward-heelers, by self-seeking political careerists, charlatans, demagogues and scoundrels. We must capture central positions. And we must not hesitate to employ emotional appeals, mass rallies, demonstrations and other techniques that are required to win at the polls. We should keep our skirts clean not in monastic seclusion, but rather in the very midst of the political scene. Our work is not exhausted by the verbal profession of ideals. Ours is the duty of buttressing our social faith with effective means for its realization.

The Need for Participation in Jewish Communal Activity

A somewhat similar picture prevails in the more limited sphere of organized Jewish life in America. Men who are not representative of the large masses of Jews, nor entrusted by the latter with responsibility for the conduct of their communal affairs, are in strategic positions of influence and authority. Reasons could, of course, be marshaled for such a condition. The self-appointed leaders are often the scions of earlier settlers whose social position and wealth (not to mention insecurity and fear) led them to look with some uneasiness at the Jews who had more recently arrived, and to adopt a paternalistic attitude to them. Men whose interests and capabilities belonged to other spheres of activity than the service of the Jewish community, and who won their spurs in other fields, thus became the leading Jews in our local and national organizations. In addition, Jewish institutional life is still largely dominated by a philanthropic outlook and rationale. The main work of American Jewry thus far has been the raising of large sums of money for relief in Europe and for the physical rebuilding of Palestine. What was more natural than that the larger donors and the men who have access to the richer elements should be given key positions and become the arbiters of Jewish policies and programs. A community based on philanthropy can expect no other development.

Yet our national fund-raising agencies, as well as our local Federations, have been enlisting increasing numbers of small contributors. Thousands of donors crowd the rolls of our various organizations. The leadership, for the most part, has remained unchanged. Multitudes of our people are disfranchised and submit, at this late date in the evolution of democracy, to taxation without representation.

Why has this condition been permitted to perpetuate itself? There has been a growth of Jewish consciousness and great gains have been made in presenting an affirmative view of Jewish life from platforms and in publications. The intensification of Zionist activity, the ministry of modern and able rabbis, the rise of Jewish education as a profession, the Reconstructionist movement, and many other advances indicate that there is a body of Jews in America who are moved by, or

at least receptive to, a positive program and philosophy of Jewish life which is rich in wholesome implications. Yet the voice of these Jews is rarely heard outside of limited circles. They generally are not in the forefront of their communities. We do not feel their strength in our national organizations. Once again we are met by the condition which we found existent in the larger society. There is a disinclination to entering the hurly-burly business of communal government. Indeed, there is a contemptuous attitude to the machinery of our organized Jewish life. Too often Zionism has served as an escape from local Jewish problems and affairs. A Zionism that ends with Palestine—ends. It has no significant consequences for the Jewish community of America, which has been placed by historic circumstances in a pre-eminent position in world Jewish economy. A program to rebuild the homeland which is not climaxed by Jewish living and thought, by participation and endeavor in the normal activities of our American community is simply a brand of sterile territorialism. It is philanthropy not philosophy.

Our duty, it seems to me, is not to turn our backs on Federation, B'nai B'rith, Jewish War Veterans and even the American Jewish Committee — but, by dint of effort and the ready assumption of responsibility, to take our places within them. We must capture, as a compulsion of our viewpoint, policy-making positions within American Jewry. The synagogues represent important potentialities for the survival of Judaism and the elevation of American Jewish life to a higher plane. We have ceded to minimal Jews the important posts in our synagogues and temples. There has been too much absenteeism on our part from the routine business of the community. To be sure there is much in our organized community to distress and repel the intelligent and sensitive soul. Who has not attended a lodge meeting or a function of some other type and has not been either bored to distraction by its inanity, infuriated by its vulgarity or disgusted with the machinations of the petty leadership that presided over it. The answer, however, is not desertion. We must work within, and with the gradualness required by sound pedagogy, teach and win fellow-Jews to our view. That this entails much unpleasant work goes without saying. It means committee meetings *ad nauseam*, resolutions, motions, helping arrange functions that are perhaps not entirely to one's taste and a hundred other trivialities. But it is a sin against the Jewish future to despair of the possibilities of our community. Not criticism from without but reshaping from within is what is needed. What is here suggested is not political maneuvering or shady backroom deals. The reference is to procedures proper to a democratic society and in consonance with democratic values. We would have been spared much of internal confusion and conflict in our midst, had American Jews who hold to a positive philosophy, earned the right to leadership, and, it must be added, earned it the hard way.

The Special Responsibility of the Educated Jew

This is no time to mince words. Honesty requires a special word about our educated Jews, men in the learned professions. Every Jewish professional man—doctor, lawyer, teacher, engineer, artist, scholar, architect—represents an investment by the Jewish community. Presumably his training has disciplined his mind and has given him a background of understanding and general knowledge. He has been taught the proper reverence for facts, the process of arriving at logical deductions, the intelligence to evolve en-

ttened and rational policies, the tech-ue of examining data and evaluating ituation — qualities of which Ameri- Jewry is so desperately in need. Has the Jewish community the moral nt to expect that a measure of such nts shall be placed in its service in hour of great need? However bureau-tic Jewish life appears, of this I am tain: it is still flexible enough to en-e a man of determination and energy arise and win a position of leadership it. Every time we find an inadequate individual in a post of responsibility, we must blame for that situation the more capable and intelligent Jew who has preferred his comfort to his patent duty, whose absorption in his personal career and ambitions has won a total victory over his communal obligations.

Ideas involve instrumentalities, ends mean means. The luxury of limiting ourselves to the expression of high aims and an affirmative philosophy of Jewish life can no longer be ours. We must forge and exploit instruments for their realization.

he Chosen People Idea an Anachronism

By MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

DR. Bamberger's article, "Are the Jews a Chosen ople?", which was published in the pre-ding issue of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, obably makes as good a case for the re-ntion of this traditional doctrine as can made. He shows an awareness of the staste which the assertion of chosenness ovokes in many modern-minded people. e seems to understand and even to ad-it that "extolling God for 'not having ade us like other peoples' " is "grating." evertheless he maintains that, properly terpreted, that doctrine remains valid d should not be discarded.

"Inherent in the doctrine of the elec-on of Israel," he says, "are positive re-gious values which Dr. Kaplan seems to nderestimate. If the belief expresses a rtain national pride, or at least a sense national privilege, it carries with it also sense of consecration and responsibility." e cites a number of quotations from ne Prophets to prove that this is so. But nat is hardly necessary, since I would be ne last to dispute that the idea of chosen-ess has long been associated in the Jew-h mind with consecration and respon-sibility. The fact is that the Jews' sense of consecration and responsibility does not derive from the belief in Israel's superiority to the other nations. However, we cannot ignore the other implications of that belief, especially those which are often sharply stressed, as in the *Alenu* and the *Habdalah prayer*. In the latter the invidiousness of the distinction between Israel and the nations is emphasized through the comparison with the distinction between light and darkness. It is that invidiousness which is highly objectionable and should be eliminated from our religion.

History No Proof That the Jews Are Chosen People

Dr. Bamberger is at great pains to show that the Chosen People idea is not out of harmony with our modern universe of discourse. He rejects the supernaturalist version of the revelation of the Torah on which tradition bases belief in the chosenness of the Jewish people. For him that belief rests rather on the evidence of history, that at least the Western World is indebted to Israel for its fundamental

religious ideas and institutions, as are also those peoples and individuals in the East that have been converted to Christianity or Islam. This fact seems to him to indicate that the Jews are committed by their history to the purpose of converting the world to the belief in the unity of God, with all the ethical implications of that belief. In a word, he accepts the mission theory of Israel's place in history. He takes that theory, however, much more literally and more seriously than do most of those who use the mission as a slogan. He, therefore, advocates a genuine attempt to convert Gentiles to Judaism. His understanding of the significance of the belief in Israel's being the Chosen People he expresses in these words: "Those who today believe in the election of Israel are those who regard Judaism as a universal religion, as *the* universal religion, with a message for all men."

I am not disposed to dispute with him any of the historic claims to distinction on which he bases his belief in Israel's chosenness. But the inference he draws from those facts are still "grating" and are by no means a logical deduction from them. To his contention that the purpose of Jewish existence is to convey a "message to all men," I might reply with an anecdote that is told of Abraham Lincoln. When a delegation of Chicago ministers visited him to urge the abolition of slavery, one of their number told him that it was God's will that he free the slaves. To which he replied: "If it is, as you say, a message from your Divine Master, is it not odd that the only channel He could send it by was the round about route by way of that awful wicked city of Chicago?" The Jewish people may not be awfully wicked but one may still ask: If God has a message for all mankind, is it not odd that the only channel He could send it by should be the round about route via Zion? To say that many of the most significant religious ideas of the Western world are of Jewish origin does not answer that question. For all we know, Lincoln might have gotten some very good suggestions from Chicagoans. But Lincoln rebuked the arrogance which assumed that he himself had less access to divine guidance than the Chicago ministers, and his rebuke was justified. The assumption by an individual or a group that it is the chosen and indispensable vehicle of God's grace to others is arrogance, no matter how euphemistically one phrases the claim to chosenness.

Moreover, if Israel's having influenced the world religiously in the past proves that Israel is the chosen of God, what inference are we to draw from the fact that Israel is today *not* influencing the religions of other peoples but rather being influenced by them? Who can read the works of such men as Sholem Asch, and Franz Werfel, to name two of the most distinguished Jewish writers by way of example, without perceiving the profound influence that Christianity has had on many Jews? Does that prove that the Christian Church has been chosen and Israel rejected? Would we not resent such an inference? It has been well said that "Ideals remain real only when one continues to realize them." If that is true then the doctrine of the Chosen People, whatever validity it may have had in the past, is today utterly unreal.

But Dr. Bamberger will probably contend that Israel *ought,* because of its heritage from the past, be exerting a religious influence. That I grant, but we deny that the exertion of influence on others is the essential purpose of a religion, even of a universal religion. There is no doubt that the Jewish religion is a universal religon, but in altogether different sense from what Dr. Bamberger seems to understand by that term.

ɔsenness Inconsistent with Naturalistic lerstanding of Religion

The difficulty with Dr. Bamberger's ɔoning arises from the fact that he has taken the trouble to think through ı conclusion the role of religion in hun civilization. He discards the assumpı, once universally maintained by the ɛerents of all the traditional religions the Western World, that religion is ɛernaturally revealed truth. So long as has that conception of religion, it is ical to believe that the revealed truth nsmitted by one's own tradition and by other people's is evidence that one's ple has been chosen. Since it is asned that salvation can be achieved y through the revealed truth, the posion of that truth imposes the obligan to convey it to others and to induct m into one's own "chosen" community way of conversion.

But when one abandons the idea of ernatural revelation, what becomes of gion? If religious truth is independ- of any historic self-revelation of God a particular people, then it is no difent from scientific truth in being acsible to and attainable by all mankind. Heed, one of the main criteria of truth its universal applicability and conform- with universal reason. Dr. Bamger himself discards the notion enterned by Kohler and Geiger that the ws, as a race, have a particular genius religion. Certainly, the capacity for asping and conveying truth in the realm religion, as in every other field of huan knowledge and experience, varies ore among the individuals of any one oup than it does between group and oup. The essence of a religion can, erefore, not be the propagation of spec religious truths. Different religions ay actually stand for the same truth out God, and, in any one religion, religious truth has always to contend with religious error and superstition.

A religion is the organized quest of a people for salvation, for experiencing life as possessed of abiding worth or holiness. In the course of that quest, it discovers religious truths. These truths, like all others, are universal. They are not the monopoly of the group that discovers them. They may be discovered by other groups as well. *What essentially distinguishes one religion from another are the sancta of the group.* These are a definite product of the group's unique historic experience. Such *sancta* are its saints and heroes, its sacred literature, its holy places, its common symbols, its customs and folk ways, all objects and associations which have been hallowed because of their relation to that people's quest for salvation. There is no more need for the *sancta* of one group being made universal than for the personal traits of one individual being universal. What is important is that these *sancta* be used to humanize men, to implement for the group those universal truths which it may share freely with any or all other religions. A religion is universal, if its conception of God is one that imposes on its adherents loyalty to a universally valid code of ethics. It is only in that sense that the Jewish religion is a universal religion.

Dr. Bamberger's Misunderstanding of Reconstructionism

Had Dr. Bamberger taken into account the place of religion in civilization, he would not have misunderstood what Reconstructionism has to say about the specific role of Jewish religion in Jewish civilization. He asks: "How is Judaism to be classified?" (By *Judaism* he means Jewish religion. Reconstructionists use the term *Judaism* to designate the totality of the Jewish civilization, not its religious aspect exclusively.) "Is it a department of

the Jewish national culture, or is it the message of God to mankind as revealed (by the mystery of Providence) through Israel? . . . How do we classify religion? Is it one of the elements of human culture — coordinate with art, literature and law — or is it the supreme value of human life?" He concludes that the basic difference between his view of Jewish religion and the Reconstructionist view is that Reconstructionism accepts the one alternative and he the other; that Reconstructionism regards religion as one element of human culture coordinate with the others, and Jewish religion as one element of Jewish national culture, whereas his point of view, which he designates as "religionist," holds religion to be the supreme value in human life and Jewish religion to be "the message of God to mankind through Israel."

The fallacy in Dr. Bamberger's argument is that, both in respect to the relation of religion in general to human life, and in respect to the relation of Jewish religion to Jewish national culture, he assumes two alternative possibilities, whereas there is a third possibility which is the one that Reconstructionism really stands for. He assumes, for example, that Jewish religion must be either a "department of the Jewish national culture" or "the message of God to mankind through Israel." He thus ignores a third possibility which becomes evident when we note the part that religion has played in the life of mankind.

The role of religion in human life is to humanize men by enabling them to transcend the limits of present human nature. It emphasizes that which differentiates man from the beast; it identifies the divine element in that which man can make out of himself. That differentia is the creative urge manifest in man's will to salvation, in his will to the achievement of the good and full life, to the realization of the holiness of human life *To the extent that any civilization con tributes to this end it is religious.* That i what we mean when we speak of Judaism as a religious civilization.

From the point of view of Reconstruc tionism, it should thus be apparent tha religion is neither one element of huma culture coordinate with others, nor th supreme value above all other value Rather is it to be considered the integra ing element among all human values. is what personality is to the individua and nationalism to the nation. That why Jewish religion is both particular an universal. It is particular, because functions within and through Jewish lif It is universal, because it seeks to int grate Jewish life with the universa life of mankind, through the worship the one God of all men and all people

The Mission Idea and Religious Imperialism

Such a conception of the universalis of Jewish life is free from a taint whi inheres in all the religious traditions th insist that their communion or *ecclesia* the chosen vehicle of divine salvation the taint of what may be called religio imperialism. Dr. Bamberger's concepti of Jewish religion as *the* universal religi does not escape that taint. Commenti on the words of the Prophet Amo "Only you have I known of all the fa ilies of the earth, therefore will I vi upon you all your iniquities," he sa "Though the passage denies that Isr is 'chosen' in the sense the Jews are s cial favorites, it affirms nonetheless t Israel stands in a special relationship God—and amazingly enough, this af mation comes from the same prophet w said: 'Are ye not unto Me as the Eth pians, O children of Israel?' Paradoxic ly, the doctrine of election is not parti laristic—but the reverse." And later

: "The doctrine of the election and
ion of Israel arose from the tension
ween the belief that God is the God
humanity and the realistic fact that
was recognized only by Israel. This
trine . . . is not the product of Jewish
alism and particularism, but of Jew-
universalism."

Dr. Bamberger states that the concep-
n of the Jewish mission originated in
tension between the belief in the One
d of all the world and the fact that
was recognized only by Israel. It
uld be more accurate to state that the
ception of the Jewish mission originat-
in the tension between the belief in
one God of all the world and the be-
that God had manifested His purpose
h reference to human life only through
ael's Torah. That being the case, the
nception of the Jewish mission originat-
in a tension between the particular-
ic notion of Israel's exclusive possession
a revealed truth and the universalistic
ncept of the unity of God. It thus rep-
sents a compromise between universal-
m and particularism rather than a pure
niversalism and, as will appear on closer
amination, a very unsatisfactory com-
romise.

For the assumption that only by ac-
pting one's own religion or acknowledg-
g its hegemony can the world be saved
the religious analogue of what, in the
olitical realm, we condemn as imperial-
m. There was a time when *imperialism*
as an honorific word. The Romans were
onvinced that, in extending their empire
hey were extending not merely Roman
ivilization but *civilization.* They were
ery proud of the *Pax Romana.* Britons
ot so long ago boasted of the civilizing
nfluence of their colonial empire as a
reat service to humanity, as "the White
man's burden" of responsiblity for the
welfare of the "inferior" or "backward"
colored races. Moreover, the claims that
empires have frequently extended the
area of human cooperation and peace are
not without foundation. Empires repre-
sent an intermediate step between a situ-
ation in which peoples regarded all stran-
gers as enemies and outlaws, and one,
not yet achieved but at least being more
and more clearly envisaged, in which
mankind is recognized as an organic
whole and all its populations as equally
concerned in and equally responsible for
contributing to the common welfare.

Similarly, missionizing religion repre-
sents an intermediate step between a situ-
ation, on the one hand, in which peoples
regarded their gods as exclusively inter-
ested in them and regarded themselves as
possessing the only way of salvation from
which all others were permanently barred,
and on the other hand, the ideal situation
in which the implications of the unity of
God are fully realized.

In that ideal situation we shall have
not a cosmopolitan religion of the kind
that is advocated by rationalists without a
sense of history, but universal religion—
with the "the" omitted — which will be
based upon the following principles:
1) all men and all peoples are in need of
salvation; 2) all groups seek salvation in
accordance with their own collective ex-
perience and by utilizing their own re-
spective cultures; 3) the ultimate salva-
tion of mankind depends on the recogni-
tion that no people can attain full
salvation until all peoples attain it, and
4) all peoples can attain salvation only
when it is recognized that God is equally
accessible to all religious groups through
the development and interpretation of
their own *sancta.*

An intermediate stage, which I have
called religious imperialism, is reached
when a group that believes itself the ex-
clusive possessor of a divinely revealed
way of life seeks to impose it on others,
whether by force of arms or of propa-

ganda. And just as political imperialism has to its credit the widening of men's political horizons, so religious imperialism has to its credit the widening of men's spiritual horizons, the expansion of the conception of God's kingdom from one which identifies it only with a particular group to one which conceives its ultimate objective as including all humanity.

Nevertheless, all imperialism has involved injustice to the conquered provinces and colonies. And when rival imperialisms co-exist, as in the modern world, the inevitable consequence is warfare on a global scale. Religious imperialism has likewise been an abundant source of warfare. Not only Islam but Christianity as well was spread by the sword. The Thirty Years' War was motivated by the rival imperialistic claims of Protestantism and Catholicism to universal hegemony. Only after Europe had been bled white and the fighting ended in a draw, did the world begin to conceive the need for religious tolerance, the actual achievement of which still belongs to the future. But even where the missionizing of a people proceeds by peaceable means it works havoc with human lives. It invades the family and disturbs its unity; it dissolves the integrity of ancient civilizations by acting as a sort of fifth column for alien groups. There has never been a people that has been missionized without resenting the implied insult to its own civilization and religion. The Boxer rebellion in China was largely a protest against foreign missions. The hatred against Jews and Christians in pagan Rome was another manifestation of the ill will which missionary activites inevitably provoke.

Was Jewish Missionary Activity Tolerant?

But Dr. Bamberger would probably contend that Jewish missionary activity was not comparable to that of Christianity and Mohammedanism, because it always relied solely on persuasion and because it always recognized that "the righteous of other nations have a share in the world to come."

I have already shown that even peaceful missionary activities inevitably create ill will. One cannot help wondering, moreover, whether the peaceable methods of Jewish missionary activities were not mainly the result of Jewish military impotence imposed by Rome rather than of superior religious insight and tolerance. When one believes one's own religion to be the only true religion, it is easy enough to justify a "holy war" as waged to extend the domain of God's kingdom and help redeem mankind. It is a historical fact that at the height of the Hasmonean power the Jews did actually impose Judaism on the Idumeans by force of arms.

As for the recognition in Jewish tradition that individuals among the Gentiles might attain salvation by conforming to the ethical laws revealed to mankind through Noah, its application did not extend nearly as far as modern Jewish liberals would like to believe. Maimonides, for example, maintained that conformity with the Noahitic laws was not effective to obtain salvation for a Gentile, unless he regarded those laws as revealed by God. Since the only evidence of any revelation to Noah is to be found in the Torah of Israel, the achievement of salvation by a Gentile was still made dependent on his recognition of Israel as the chosen vehicle of divine salvation for mankind.

Viewed in the light of the foregoing, it appears that the mission theory of the role of Jewish religion is far less universal in its outlook than Reconstructionism's conception of the role of Jewish religion. Reconstructionism claims for Judaism no monopoly of religious truth nor any spiritual supremacy or superiority over other religious or cultural groups. It does not

adiate the "sense of consecration and onsibility" which our fathers derived n the belief in the chosenness of el, but it seeks to put them on a firm- foundation that conforms to reality does not involve invidious pretensions piritual superiority over others.

ation vs. Election

econstructionists realize that the whole rse of Jewish history has been so dom- ed by religious motivations that Jews not be true to themselves as a people nout stressing the religious character of aism. Jewish religion gives to Jewish lization a conscious direction making the enhancement not only of Jewish but of the life of mankind, and thus filling the cosmic purpose manifest in man life. That direction is a commit- nt and a dedication which Recon- actionists reverently accept from wish tradition. That is what we mean en we stress the vocation of the Jew- people. This sense of vocation fulfills the legitimate spiritual wants to which ief in the election of Israel ministers. the same time it is free from all those plications which make a too candid ertion of Jewish chosenness grate even Dr. Bamberger, notwithstanding his oretic vindication of the traditional ctrine when couched in euphemistic guage.

Nor is Dr. Bamberger correct when he cribes our dislike of exaggerated Jewish tentions to "the conventions of Anglo- xon taste." Since when is humility a tue prized by the Anglo-Saxon rather an the Jewish tradition? Our Torah aises Moses for his meekness. It records e prayer of Moses that he be blotted t of God's book, if only his people ight enjoy God's grace. It tells of his fusing to be disturbed by the news that dad and Medad were prophesying in e camp and his exclaiming in response, Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!" Can we imagine Moses thanking God that He had not made him like the rest of Israel but had made him the chosen vehicle for conveying God's message to his spiritually inferior brethren?

Dr. Bamberger is not satisfied with the belief in the vocation of Israel as a substitute for belief in election, because, as he points out, not all vocations are of equal importance to society. "Democracy and religion," he tells us, "alike affirm the dignity of all individuals and their equality before God. Nevertheless, Harry S. Truman has a role in history dramatically different from that of John Jones; and he has a consequent responsibility which . . . does not weigh so heavily on John Jones. For . . . President Truman has a mission. You may prefer to say that John Jones and Harry Truman both have a 'vocation.' John's is to be janitor of the 'Five and Ten' and Harry Truman's is to provide leadership for peace. But it is not belittling either Mr. Jones or his vocation if we regard Mr. Truman's as infinitely more crucial."

Granted. And granted, too, that Israel's role in the history of mankind is also a a crucial one. That would still not justify inclusion in the liturgy of prayers praising God for making Israel's role more crucial. What would Americans have said, if, on his accession to the presidency, Truman had prayed, "I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast not made my vocation that of the janitor John Jones, but hast chosen me from among all Americans to lead the nation and mankind to peace?" I doubt whether, under those circumstances, even his divine "election" would secure his reelection as President, if ever he should run for that office. The public would have resented his attitude as priggishness and religious cant. A truly religious soul never reacts in that way to the fact of his being given a crucially important vocation. He is rather hum-

bled by that fact and disposed to question his own qualifications and to accept as a grave and burdensome responsibility the tasks to which, in loyalty, he feels dedicated.

All these considerations make it clear that, whether we apply rational or pragmatic considerations, the traditional formula concerning Israel's divine election is objectionable. Rationally it has no place in a universe of discourse from which belief in the supernatural revelation of religious truth is excluded. Pragmatically it is objectionable as barring the way to peace and harmony among religions and making for self-righteousness and cant. All the genuine values that once attached themselves to this belief are maintained by the substitution for it of the doctrine of "vocation." That doctrine leaves the way open to an assertion of the universality of Jewish religion by the recognition of the universal presence of God in all religions and the universal obligation of each to use its own *sancta* for glorifying not its own people or church, but mankind as a whole, which is the universal Kingdom of God.

Book Notes

AN INADEQUATE DEFENSE OF HUMAN EQUALITY

ARE MEN EQUAL? By Henry Alonzo Myers, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons 1945, *viii* + 188 *pp.*

THE question raised by the title of this book is in the eyes of Professor Myers, a purely rhetorical one. His answer from page one to the last word of the last page is "Decidedly, yes!" But the question is, in the eyes of many, far from being rhetorical. As a matter of fact, as Professor Myers points out, many who claim to believe in democracy refuse to accept a "yes" answer. In view of this state of affairs one might expect (and there is certainly needed) a careful explication of the meaning of "equality" and an analysis of the arguments in favor of the assertion that men are equal. This is lacking in Professor Myer's book.

That the social structure depends to a great degree upon our appraisal of the worth of men has become extremely clear today. Professor Myers vividly states the alternatives as a choice between the "justice of equality" and the "justice of inequality." But the question remains: "In what sense are men equal?" Professor Myers' approach to the problem through the treatment of the notion of equality in American literature. The development of the notion of equality in American literature is ably traced even though there is a great deal of personal interpretation. The essential weakness involved in tracing an idea and treating its development as supporting the idea lies in the fact that it is not difficult to trace the contradictory idea also. That many literary and political figures in American life believed and wrote that men were unequal Professor Myers admits. The argument in favor of equality must take another form. Such an argument must demonstrate that, in some sense, men *are* equal; that this sense is significant; and that this sense makes it possible for men to live together *better*.

According to Myers, men are equal in the fact that they have an ultimate destiny. Since, in addition, Myers argues

at behind all inequalities, there lies the *timate worth* of each individual with pect to which they are equal, it would pear, at least by implication, that the timate worth of men lies in their ulti- ate destiny. The argument is simply t convincing. It can always be retorted at even if men are *ultimately* equal in eir common fate, there is no reason in eating them as equal in their *present* istence. The notion of equality in de- ocratic theory should have more basis an the fact that ultimately all men die all men suffer in achieving greatness is significant that the writings of the unders of American democracy stress t the common fate but the common igin of men. Men are equal, it is gued, because they are *born* equal, not cause they have a common fate. De- ocracy has its eyes on the living pres- t and not on the future fate of men. at *all* men have the right to "life, erty, and the pursuit of happiness" fol- ws with much more validity from equal- of origin than from equality of ulti- ate fate. ". . . the social compact . . . between men and not between war- ors, or property owners, or doctors or liticians." (p. 22)

In very eloquent language Professor yers depicts the feeling by each in- vidual of his own worth. (pp. 29-33). is is a parallel notion to the one of timate fate. For here are expressed the ys and sorrows men feel as they ex- rience the world and consider them- lves its focus. The need for compan- nship is a need for equals. Since all en need companions, all men are equal. nce each man "is to himself equal to e great world of his experience," *all* e equal to each other since each is ual to "the great world of his ex- rience." (p. 32). Such language and ntiments should not perhaps be ana- zed. But if the argument for equality is to be maintained, it must stand on the validity of its premises and the cogency of its deductions. Two objections to this argument offer themselves. In the first case, the need for companionship is not always a need for equals. This psycho-analysis has taught us and appears to be true despite the artist's fancy. Secondly, it is assumed that the world as experienced by each individual is equal to the world as experienced by any other individual.

Myers is on much sounder ground in the last chapter where he attempts to argue on an empirical basis that equality is a better principle for human living than inequality. The idea of equality has certainly justified itself as a foundation for political life in these United States. And it is certainly true that the notion of equality with all its ambiguity and vagueness, is essential to any theory of democracy.

LOUIS O. KATTSOFF

Correspondence

A German Haggadah with a Reconstructionist Approach

Sirs:

After rereading several of the thoughtful and stimulating articles on the role of "Ritual in the Jewish Home" in your recent issues, I felt impelled to call your attention to a unique book which was published by a German Jew some years before hell broke loose in Germany. It is called "The Offenbach Haggadah" (*Die Offenbacher Haggadah*), and it more or less presents the Reconstructionist approach to Jewish Ritual, viewing it as an opportunity "not only for devoted adherence to worthwhile religious habits of the Jewish people, but also for creative self-expression on the part of the individual Jew" (Jack J. Cohen, "Ritual in the Jewish Home," *The Reconstructionist,* May 18, 1945). This Haggadah was not written by a rabbi nor by a professional writer of books . . . but by an enthusiastic Jewish layman, scion of a well-known family among whom the Seder had been observed from generation to generation. The book was inspired by the ardent wish of a Jewish father to keep our sacred heritage alive for his children and their children's children.

Moreover, it contained two elements of nov-

elty in a Jewish *Haggadah shel Pesah.* As the author happened to be a lover of Jewish scholarship, he felt free to add whatever new sidelights or new explanations his learned friends had given him in the course of many years and many Seder-nights. In addition to this, the author had, from his youth, been a book collector and lover of fine books and a friend of many artists; so he took care that this Haggadah should be as beautiful in its appearance, as in its contents. Accordingly, this "Offenbach Haggadah," as he liked to call it, because he himself, as well as most of the scholars and artists who contributed to it, happened to live in Offenbach, turned out to be a veritable gem of a book, "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." . . . On its original publication in 1927, Jews and Gentiles joined in praising it. Dr. Baeck, the Dean of Jewish Liberals, and Joseph Carlebach, the famous rabbi of the Altona Orthodox congregation, gave it wide acclaim. And Professor Rade, a Protestant Professor of Theology and lifelong friend of Hermann Cohen, welcomed the "faith and the faithfulness, which in this book had succeeded in keeping alive customs and tradition, most valuable for any religion."

After the author came to the United States, Stefan Zweig saw this book and deemed it worthy of being translated into English and adapted to its new surroundings; he even predicted an outstanding success for such an adaptation. This opinion was shared by the well-known historian, Prof. Ismar Elbogen. The author of the Offenbach Haggadah, Dr. S. Guggenheim, has been living in New York for some years and brought the few remaining copies of this "peculiar treasure" with him to his new homeland. I wonder whether it would be feasible to follow up Zweig's suggestion now that the immediate claims of the war effort are somewhat eased. . . . Anyway, World Jewry would be the richer if it were acquainted with this outstanding book, which is prone to fulfill the mission ascribed by Malachi, last of the prophets, to Elijah—to unite the hearts of the children with the hearts of the parents. . . .

BERTHA BADT STRAUSS

On the Jewish Attitude to Proselytizing

Sirs:

To admit one's own faults is a virtue; to admit faults that one does not possess is folly and, when a group is involved, it is akin to libel.

In a recent article on inter-religious good will, (*The Reconstructionist,* Vol. XI, No. 12), Dr. Ira Eisenstein contends that, as a prerequisite for complete understanding, all three major religions abandon their missionary policy. He puts Judaism in a class with Catholicism and Protestantism as a missionary religion.

On what does he base his contention? Does he not know that Judaism discourages proselytism, both in law and in practise? Does he not know that one who asks to be admitted into the fold on conviction is apprised of the sorry state in which Jewish people find themselves, and of the burden of laws and prohibitions that would now become his obligation? Let it not be said that this is just a gesture, calculated to sharpen his desire to enter our fold. For in *Yoreh Deah,* Hilkot Gerim, 268:7, we read: "A minor non-Jew may be admitted into the Jewish fold by his father; and if he has no father and comes of his own accord, or his mother brings him, the court may admit him. For it is a privilege to be admitted into the Jewish fold, and a privilege may be bestowed upon one without his knowledge; but *when he grows up, whether his father brought him or the court admitted him, he has a right to withdraw,* and then he is regarded not as a Jewish heretic but as a non-Jew." (Italics mine.)

Even the Church, which is not averse to claiming infants who had been secretly baptized by over-zealous Christian maids, would admit that in this case the Synagogue could honestly claim such a one, for the parent had voluntarily brought it into the fold. Yet Judaism has so high a regard for the individual that it grants him a choice.

Of course, we are not Nazis who base their "superiority" on blood and soil; our door is ever open to those who earnestly desire to enter our fold. And in every generation we have had our *gere tzedek,* who had everything to lose and nothing to gain by identifying themselves with a despised minority, except the exhilaration of finding a satisfying faith.

But ours never was a proselytizing religion. Even Hillel, who is pictured as the champion of proselytes, never went out of his way to bring people into the fold. In the story of the three heathens in the Talmud, it was they who first contacted Shammai and then Hillel, and asked to be admitted.

Zealous missionary work is an insult to intelligence. One wonders whether it is not a subconscious effort to shout down gnawing doubts. For one who is convinced that he has attained the truth lives by it quietly and makes no effort to convince others; let others, if they care to, come to him and ask for the secret of his peace of mind. High-pressure salesmanship arouses in the customer's mind the suspicion that the product may be shoddy; otherwise customers would beat a path to his door.

Since Dr. Eisenstein, as a rabbi acquainted with the sources, could not have made his statement out of ignorance, he must have made it in a spirit of appeasement, in order to obtain a more sympathetic response from his Christian readers. I maintain, however, that it is dangerous to ascribe to Judaism faults

: it does not possess, even in an effort to
ad good will.
Wise men, be cautious in what you say."

LOUIS FEINBERG, *Rabbi,*
Avondale Synagogue, Cincinnati, O.

abbi Feinberg might, for some reason he
s not state, *wish* that Judaism was never a
sionizing religion; but unfortunately, for
, that is not the case. I quote Moore,
daism," Vol. I, p. 323: "The conviction
t Judaism as the one true religion was des-
d to become the universal religion was a
ularity of the Jews. No other religion in
r world and time made any such preten-
s or cherished such aspirations. . . .
belief in the future universality of the
religion, the coming of an age when 'the
d shall be king over all the earth,' when
Lord shall be one and His name One,'
to efforts to convert the Gentiles to the
ship of the one true God and to faith
obedience according to the revelations He
given, and made Judaism the first great
sionary religion of the Mediterranean
ld."

quote the Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X, p.
: "Eleazar b. Pedat sees in Israel's dispersion
divine purpose of winning proselytes. (Pes.
b). Jethro is the classical witness to the
ument of other proselytes that the 'door was
shut in the face of the heathen.' (Pesik.
35). He is introduced as writing a letter
Moses (Mek. Yitro, Amalek I) advising
to make the entry into Judaism easy for
selytes. Ruth and Rahab are quoted as illus-
ting the same lesson (Shoher Tob to Ps. v.
. Emperor Antoninus also is mentioned as
proselyte (Jer. Meg. 72b, 74a) whose con-
sion illustrates the desirability of making
verts. The circumstance that Nero (Git.
a) and in fact most of the Biblical persecut-
of Israel are represented as having finally
braced Judaism (Sanh. 96b), the further
t that almost every great Biblical hero is
arded as an active propagandist, and that
at teachers like Shemaiah and Abtalion,
iba and Meir were proselytes, or were re-
ded as proselytes or as descendants of pro-
ytes (see Bacher, "Ag. Tan." i., 5-6) go far
suggest that proselytes were not always
ked upon with suspicion."

I quote Schechter (Studies in Judaism, sec-
H series, p. 185): "Universality means with
m (i.e., the Jews of Eastern Europe) what
meant with the Prophets and their Jewish
cessors—that the whole world should be-
me Jews, not that Judaism should fade out
o the world."

Now, it was true, that, as a rule, the Jews
not organize missionary expeditions to go
t and convert. But there were times when
nversion, even by force, was perpetrated;
ness the coercive conversion of the Idumeans
John Hyrcanus. And if the prospective pro-selyte was warned again and again about the troubles of Israel and the burden of the Torah, it was not to "sharpen his desire"—that is true—but it was equally not for the purpose of excluding him. The care taken was to insure that the conversion was a genuine conversion, not motivated by ulterior purposes like the desire for wealth or power, or marriage to a particular woman.

As for the passage in the *Yoreh Deah,* Rabbi Feinberg would not want anyone to be misled through partial quotation. The very next statement (268,8) makes quite clear that the right to withdraw is limited to those cases in which the person has not been practicing Judaism during his adulthood. The commentators discuss the matter at some length, and some record other qualifications to the broad statement which Rabbi Feinberg quoted exclusively.

It seems strange that Rabbi Feinberg should try to make Judaism appear non-missionary in character. After all, was it not logical that Judaism be missionary, as Moore suggests? Perhaps Rabbi Feinberg is the one guilty of appeasement. Perhaps *he* is attempting to reassure the Christians that we have no designs upon their unsuspecting members. Let me assure Rabbi Feinberg that the Christians *want us to be missionaries;* they resent the doctrine: Judaism for Jews and Christianity for Christians. They want Christianity for everyone, and they want us to try to make Judaism the religion of all—and see who wins. Thus my thesis, if anything, was bound to arouse Christian opposition, especially since I suggest that Christianity ought to reconstruct itself, as we are striving to reconstruct Judaism.

IRA EISENSTEIN

Community Funds and Jewish Cultural Interests

Sirs:

I am always amazed when I read your editorial comments criticizing Jewish community leadership as having a negative approach to positive Jewish values.

In your November 30 issue, you claim that Jewish education, Jewish cultural and other Jewish interests are being "starved of community funds." I am wondering how you evaluate Jewish values.

The funds that are being raised by American communities, by your so-called negative leadership, are allocated to various Jewish causes ranging from overseas relief, Palestine, family and child care services, hospitals, group work services, guidance, Jewish education and to various national Jewish agencies. Do not these causes represent Jewish values? What is being "starved" by Jewish communities today? Do you question the need to allocate the largest percentage raised in the communities to overseas relief and the upbuilding of Palestine? How would you measure the priority of Jewish causes?

If one studies the allocations made by the American Jewish communities to Jewish needs, one is impressed with the fact that allocations, on the whole, have been sensitive to expanding Jewish needs everywhere and have been sufficiently flexible to meet new needs when they come up. A striking example is the increase given to the National Jewish Welfare Board during the war period. What better example is there than the increased goals being reached in behalf of overseas needs?

The November *Information Bulletin* of the Association for Jewish Education reported a 42 per cent increase in behalf of Jewish education in forty-two cities between the years 1942 and 1944. There is no doubt in my mind that the increase is continuing, but that is beside the point. The fact remains that with the growing awareness by American Jews of their responsibilities on the local and overseas level, there is a corresponding growth in their readiness to support such institutions as merit their support.

If you would trouble yourself to consider the over-all picture of American Jewish life today, you would note that community after community is steadily expanding Jewish communal programs to meet the needs in the areas involved. There are few fields relating to Jewish life to which a normal, dynamic Jewish community does not lend its wholehearted support. To be sure, there may be instances where the wheels of communal life grind slowly, but they do grind and they do progress for the enrichment of Jewish life.

ISAAC SELIGSON,
Assistant Director, Associated Jewish Philanthropies, Boston, Mass.

Mr. Seligson's comment on the statement which appeared in Realities and Values of our November 30th issue, implies that we made a general indictment against the leadership of all Jewish communities. Our strictures were directed against "the few wealthy philanthropists who control many Jewish community funds." In some Jewish communities, democratic forces have challenged the old philanthropic leadership and either supplanted it or made it yield on specific issues. The fact is, however, that almost every gain for Zionism, Jewish education and other affirmative Jewish values (except philanthropy) has been won in the face of resistance from the philanthropic leadership. —EDITORS.

REALITIES AND VALUES

(Continued from Page 8)

a fact." We are proud of this praise, and we hope that we American Jews may justify it by doing all in our power toward removing the barriers to social equality between Whites and Negroes in America.

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THREE CHEERS FOR THE North Carolina Student Legislature, a forum of students representing every White institution of learning in the state, for adopting a resolution to invite Negro students to its session next year! And three cheers for Frank Graham, the courageous president of the University of North Carolina, who has backed the students' decision even in the face of a threat to slash appropriations for the University!

▼

REMEMBER THE SLOGAN, "Clear it with Sidney!", so derisively used by Republican anti-Semites in the last presidential campaign? Well, it has been raised again, and this time by a writer in the liberal New York Post—but not derisively. Lowell Mellet, in his column, "On the Other Hand," calls attention to the agreement recently signed between the Clothing Manufacturers Association of the U. S. and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, Sidney Hillman's union. The agreement affects 150,000 workers, who, according to the union, will obtain an aggregate benefit of $60,000,000 annually, individual wage increases ranging from 20 to 31 per cent. And this was achieved by amicable agreement between management and labor without even having to resort to the machinery for the settlement of disputes which has existed for many years in the industry. This is a notable achievement, and, since Jews are represented in considerable number among both parties to the agreement, we are particularly gratified by it. It stands out in sharp contrast with the bitter strife that prevails in other industries at the present time. We, therefore, second Mr. Mellett's suggestion that labor, management and government "clear it with Sidney."